

**MINUTES OF THE  
AUBURN CITY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING  
February 1, 2011**

The regular session of the Auburn City Planning Commission was called to order on February 1, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Snyder in the Council Chambers, 1225 Lincoln Way, Auburn, California.

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:** Snyder, Spokely, Vitas & Young

**COMMISSIONERS ABSENT:** Worthington

**STAFF PRESENT:** Will Wong, Community Development Dir.  
Reg Murray, Senior Planner  
Adrienne Graham, Consultant Planner

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. PLEDGE OF ALLIGIENCE**

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

None

**IV. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Bill Grant 120 Awali Avenue, Auburn addressed the Commission. He said he noticed this is a public hearing concerning access to the Baltimore Ravine Specific Plan and his comments would be addressing that if appropriate.

Chair Snyder directed him to speak during discussion about the BRSP item to follow.

**V. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS**

**VI. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

- A. SITE ACCESS DISCUSSION FOR THE BALTIMORE RAVINE SPECIFIC PLAN (BRSP) AND STUDY AREA PROJECT.** The Planning Commission will provide direction to City staff regarding the information needed to compare two alternative access alignments providing primary access to the BRSP Project from Auburn Folsom Road. The first alternative would be located on the west side of Auburn Folsom Road opposite Pacific Street. The second location is also located on the west side of Auburn Folsom Road approximately 750-feet south of the Auburn Folsom Road/Pacific Street intersection.

Planner Murray gave the staff report stating the item was returned to the Planning Commission from the City Council. On January 13<sup>th</sup> the City Council heard the Baltimore Ravine Specific Plan and Study Area project. The Project was previously reviewed by the Planning Commission over the course of several different hearings, either for individual issues, or more recently on September 21<sup>st</sup> and November 16<sup>th</sup> where the Commission reviewed the entirety of the project, being the specific plan, the various associated entitlements, and the environmental document.

Planner Murray noted that at the November 16<sup>th</sup> hearing the project was forwarded to the City Council for their review and consideration. Following the Planning Commission's action in November, an appeal of the large lot map as well as the environmental document was submitted.

On January 13<sup>th</sup> the City Council met, took public testimony, and reviewed the project. The Council's action on January 13<sup>th</sup> was to deny the appeal for the environmental impact report and the large lot tentative map, and to table the discussion on the project pending review of access alternatives 4 and 5. The Planning Commission was to return a recommendation to the Council relative to those two access options.

Planner Murray stated that staff wanted to identify for the Commission the type of information that was going to be provided for the Commission's review of the issue, and that staff wanted the Commission's input on any other information they might want.

Commissioner Spokely asked if all the attachments, all the correspondence that came in, meeting notes and stuff has been submitted to us.

Planner Murray replied two letters were provided by Sarah Ann Ough and are part of the Commission information. He also noted that the applicant provided information regarding rights to the Herdal access. Also, after release of the report, the City received several letters from members of the Sipe family. The Sipe family property is located in the area being considered for the alternatives and responded due to the potential for some of their property being affected.

Commissioner Spokely asked if the two alternative access alignments would affect the Sipe property.

Planner Murray replied that the alignments of both Alternatives would cross UPRR property, property owned by the Auburn Recreation District, and then property owned by the Sipe family.

Commissioner Spokely asked if it was appropriate to talk about the information he would like for his review.

Planner Murray suggested doing so after public comment.

Commissioner Spokely asked for clarification on the action the Commission would be taking tonight, and if it included action regarding the City's coordination efforts in talking with Placer County about the Newcastle interchange improvements required as a mitigation measure.

Planner Murray commented that Council directed staff to pursue the issue of the Newcastle interchange mitigation, and that the Commission's responsibility was to review the two access alternatives and provide a recommendation to City Council.

Commissioner Spokely commented that he would like to talk about Item 1 and Item 5 in the staff report and whether the Commission could ask the project engineer for information about those items.

Chair Snyder noted that the Commission could ask for that information.

Commissioner Spokely suggested information and plans that the project engineer could provide to illustrate slopes and grades.

Planner Murray referred to graphics being provided and that the applicant would be able to describe the information and how it relates to the access alternatives.

Chair Snyder noted that he wanted to insure that the information was provided in a fashion that the general public could understand it.

Chair Snyder opened the public hearing and reviewed meeting procedures for the public. He noted the City Council's direction to look at the two alternate access points, and that input would be limited to access issues.

Michael Otten, resident of Auburn addressed the Commission. Mr. Otten suggested that the best and main access should be via a dedicated interchange on Interstate 80.

Mr. Grant addressed the Commission, noting that his comments relate to Alternatives 4 and 5.

Chair Snyder suggested that Mr. Grant address his comments as part of the testimony later as part of the project.

Mr. Grant indicated he would speak later.

Stephen Des Jardins, the project applicant, addressed the Commission.

Mr. Des Jardins provided a presentation which addressed the following:

- He referred to an email sent to the Community Development Department regarding his current legal access rights to Herdal Drive as detailed by his title company.
- He noted the access rights dated to 1965 from the original owner George Herdal.
- He reviewed the history of the access as it related to the Vista del Valle subdivisions that were approved in the '70's and '80's.
- He noted that his property was zoned in the '70's for over 300 units.
- He stated that he is only seeking approval of Plan Area 1 and the 270 units at this time, and that Plan Area 2 requires additional approvals by the City.
- He noted that his access rights to Herdal would not go away if alternative access points were required for the project.
- He noted that other access options were considered and evaluated in the past, but discarded because they did not make sense.
- He noted that the Alternatives would result in steep slopes and require at least 210,000 cubic yards of fill, resulting in about 15,000 dump truck trips.
- With the Alternatives, you lose 14 acres of open space, cut off access to other open space, and negatively affect wildlife.
- He noted the impacts to the Sipe family, not just with the loss of property, but the loss of beautiful views due to the roadway that would be placed on their property.
- He commented on the steep topography, with slopes greater than 30% and what that means for the roadway options.

Chair Snyder thanked the applicant and commented that the applicant would have a chance to comment on any questions that are brought up by the audience.

Leslie Sipe of 396 Baltimore Road addressed the Commission. Ms. Sipe noted that she owns the property at 396 Baltimore Road, which has been in her family for over 150 years, and the she and her family are adamantly opposed to the alternative access. She noted that every adult member of her family submitted a letter to the Commission. Ms. Sipe noted that the new alternatives would not only be taking a third at least of their property, but would affect the most valuable part, which is the hill that has a view of the Sacramento Valley and the Marysville Buttes, and that would ruin her family's heritage or legacy.

Bill Grant, 120 Awali Avenue, addressed the Commission. Mr. Grant noted that the EIR considered and rejected Numbers 4 and 5, but felt that the EIR should have considered three other options - Baltimore Road, Indian Rancheria Road. and Indian Hill Road. Mr. Grant submitted a letter that

evaluated each of these three options, and then reviewed the three options with the Commission. Mr. Grant also offered a suggestion that one of these three options should be used as a substitute to the Werner Road access, as he believes Werner road to be inadequate, awkward, unsafe, and a misguided choice. He felt that Plan Area 2 would be better served with both an access of Indian Hill Road and Herdal Drive, or in lieu of Herdal Drive. perhaps option 4 or 5, if they are viable.

Kim Dahlin of 590 Rogers Way addressed the Commission. She stated that she and her husband offered to tour the access options with Councilman Hanley. Ms. Dahlin indicated her support of the Sipe's situation, and stated that City Council had previously stated that they would not condemn or use eminent domain on anybody's property. She noted that the Fire Chief previously identified that Herdal would be the best access point. A

Michael Sipe of 390 Baltimore Road addressed the Commission. Mr. Sipe recognized the issues that the Planning Commission would be struggling to evaluate. He commented that the Herdal access is already in place and doesn't require the taking of his family's property or impacts to UPRR or ARD property. Mr. Sipe noted that the process to acquire property would be considerable. He stated that he did not think Mr. Grant's option for using Baltimore Road would be viable.

Chair Snyder replied thank you, next please, don't be shy. Basically one whack and the public comment is ended so don't let me do that if you want to speak. Come on up and take a seat. Yes sir.

Leonard Smith of 12055 Norman Lane addressed the Commission. Mr. Smith indicated he understood how the Sipes felt, but he doesn't want to have his property and that of 39 other families, impacted by noise, traffic, and danger on Herdal. He stated that the project raises safety, noise, and traffic issues. He expressed safety concerns for the roads that take access off of Herdal and questioned if stop signs were necessary. Mr. Smith commented that the project isn't 250 homes, but 750 homes, because that's what the full project is. Given the number of trips per home, that's a lot of new traffic on Herdal, and that traffic will cause accidents. He questioned sight lines at intersections along Herdal as well as for the driveway into the small retail center located at the southwest corner of Herdal and Auburn Folsom. Mr. Smith stated that he believed Pacific Street would provide quicker access than Herdal.

Norman Chavez of 11985 Norman way addressed the Commission. Mr. Chavez asked to have the information from staff in a timely fashion so that he'd have a reasonable time to comment on it. He suggested that traffic counts be provided. Mr. Chavez commented that the access being provided applies to the whole project, not just Plan Area 1 as represented by the

applicant, and that's something the Commission should consider. He requested that the correspondence the City's received be put on the website.

Tate Sipe of 390 Baltimore Road addressed the Commission. Mr. Sipe addressed the alternatives and noted that they were far more dangerous than the Herdal access since they would be constructed through very steep terrain, resulting in steep grades and sharp curves. He also stated that he doesn't want his family's property to be taken for the road.

Gary Koolhoff of 11965 Norman Lane addressed the Commission. He noted that no one likes the Herdal access point, but acknowledge that the developer has the right to use Herdal. He suggested that the project will impact the area in several ways, such as traffic, and that the developer should be responsible for addressing the project's impacts.

Gina Wiskas of 10930 Oak View Terrace addressed the Commission. Ms. Wiskas noted that her property was the very last property, before the bridge and backs up to the railroad property. Ms. Wiskas commented about the following:

- She thanked the City Council and Planning Commission for looking at other alternatives.
- She indicated she wasn't totally against the project, though development of Baltimore Ravine, and the destruction of the natural landscape, would be the equivalent of Auburn's "Avatar".
- She expressed that development through her backyard and the backyards of her neighbors was unconscionable. She noted that the Herdal extension would result in the removal of 27 trees behind her house that would be replaced by a 7'-8' tall wall.
- She noted that she's taken care of the property in the right of way over the years.
- She commented that the Herdal extension, with noise and pollution from school busses, city busses, garbage trucks, not to mention the construction noise creating the road and the bridge next to our property line, will forever alter her environment and that the proposal makes her feel violated.
- She feels that some access other than Herdal should be provided to Baltimore Ravine, perhaps Pacific Street.
- She stated she understood that Herdal is a deeded road, but questioned whether it was ever going to be constructed.
- Regarding comments about circuitous roads, she noted that Auburn has many such roads.
- She expressed concerns about lack of good visibility on Herdal, and that Herdal is not an appropriate street for another 270 homes.
- She concluded by stating that "Just because it's easy, doesn't make it right".

Chair Snyder inquired if anyone else wanted speak and closed Public Hearing.

Chair Snyder asked the applicant to come forward and address issues raised during in public comment.

Stephen Des Jardins, the applicant, responded to the following items:

- He noted that the project has three access points - Herdal, Werner and the emergency access with Perry Ranch Road; and that the Herdal/Werner connector is a new east west thoroughfare that helps emergency crews.
- He commented that only 270 units with Plan Area 1 are being considered now, and that Plan Area 2 will come back to the Planning Commission and the City Council in the future.
- He commented that having a master plan for the entire area is a good thing, as it will help people such as the Sipes and others who've been locked in the urban reserve area.
- He noted that a traffic study has been done and he's confident about the findings in the study.
- About the road plan, he clarified that the road alignment crosses natural slopes of 30%, but that the road itself only has a maximum slope of 15%.
- He agreed with Michael Sipes comment regarding safety and the 15% road grades, in that it's probably more than you really want to tolerate, that it's not as safe or fast an access, and that you'd need to fill more to reduce the slopes further.
- The alternatives are five times the length of the Herdal access.
- He noted that the Herdal access stays in the existing 60' wide right-of-way and doesn't go through any backyards. He commented that the right-of-way has existed since 1965 and he simply wants to develop his property rights on access and zoning for Plan Area 1.
- Regarding traffic at the Auburn Folsom/Herdal intersection, a restriping plan has already been developed to address the issue.

Chair Snyder thanked the applicant and brought the item back to the Commission for deliberation.

Commissioner Spokely appreciated the topographic and slope maps that were provided and asked if Alternatives 4 or 5 were impacting a new watershed that wasn't impacted with the original project. He commented that the same question would hold true for other things, such as what resource issues might be affected and what studies would need to be done.

Commissioner Spokely stated he was interested in a assessment by the Fire Department of emergency response times. He wanted to know the difference in response times for Alternatives 4 and 5, as well as for the Herdal access, in order to have a basis of comparison between these access points.

Chair Snyder requested that staff expand the information being provided to the Commission to include the Herdal access, along with Alternatives 4 and 5, where appropriate. He noted that he didn't think the Commission could just narrow the comparison to Alternatives 4 and 5 because everybody wants talk about Herdal at the same time.

Commissioner Spokely agreed.

Commissioner Spokely commented that Alternatives 4 and 5 have bridges to cross the UPRR. These create possible attractive nuisances and would like the Police Department to address this issue. Commissioner Spokely also expressed that he thought the bridge and embankments for either alternative would be visible from Auburn Folsom Road and requested a graphic of some type that would illustrate what views of the alternatives would look like driving up Auburn Folsom Road.

Chair Snyder suggested a photograph with the bridge superimposed on it.

Commissioner Spokely requested that the "net footprint impact" be provided for each option, identifying the size of the area that impacted by the footprint of the improvements, as well as any features that might be affected.

Planner Murray asked for clarification about this information.

Commissioner Spokely clarified that he wanted features such as creeks and culverts identified in order to better understand the impacts associated with each access alternative.

Commissioner Spokely also asked for examples of grades for other roads in Auburn, such as Indian Hill Road, in order to relate to the 15% grade proposed with the alternatives.

Chair Snyder asked for an example of a 15% slope.

Planner Murray relayed that staff could provide examples of certain common streets with representative grades.

Commissioner Spokely asked that information be provided in a way to show an common relationship, such as acreages being related to the size of a



football field. He also wanted to understand the legal implications to the City should the City select an alternative access given the applicant's current access to the property.

Commissioner Young expressed concerns about public safety and access Alternatives 4 and 5 if the City were to take and condemn through eminent domain. He requested to have legal counsel discuss the legal implications of taking property when other access is available. Commissioner Young also stated that he is very interested with what the Fire Chief and Police Chief have to say again about access and response times. He requested that the Fire Chief address NFPA 1700 standards regarding fire department response times for Herdal and the other two options.

Commission Snyder proposed the following motion for Planning Commission consideration:

The Planning Commission directs staff to provide the information for Alternatives 4 and 5 as identified in the February 1 staff report and to provide the same information for the Herdal Drive access. The Commission also directs staff to provide recommendations for Alternatives 4 & 5 as well as recommendations comparing Alternatives 4 & 5 with the Herdal Drive access.

Commissioner Spokely seconded the motion.

Planner Murray clarified whether or not the motion was to include the distinction as modified by the discussion this evening.

Chair Snyder replied that the motion directed staff to provide comparisons and recommendations.

Chair Snyder concluded the meeting.

Planner Murray noted that the next meeting will be February 15, 2011.

Chair Snyder adjourned the hearing.